

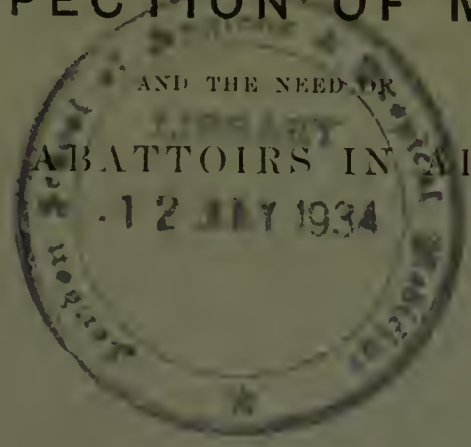
SFM. +0

P. 17102

REPORT

TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
ON THE
INSPECTION OF MEAT

AND THE NEED FOR
PUBLIC ABATTOIRS IN ABERDEEN.



BY
W. J. SIMPSON, M.D.,
Medical Officer of Health.

William John Simpson 1857-1934

ABERDEEN :
PRINTED BY JOHN AVERY & CO. LIMITED,
14 GALLOWGATE.

1885.

REPORT

TO THE

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

ON THE

INSPECTION OF MEAT

AND THE NEED OF

PUBLIC ABATTOIRS IN ABERDEEN.

BY

W. J. SIMPSON, M.D.,


Medical Officer of Health.

ABERDEEN :

PRINTED BY JOHN AVERY & CO. LIMITED,

14 GALLOWGATE.

1885.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

<https://archive.org/details/b24766070>



REPORT.

Being asked by the Public Health Committee to draw up a statement as to the measures adopted to check the sale of diseased meat in the city, I beg to report as follows :—

1. The slaughter-houses are periodically visited, and the carcasses and animals are examined.
2. Information is obtained from the Police and other persons as to any carcasses brought into town at night, or under suspicious circumstances, and these are frequently traced to their destination and then examined.
3. Butchers' shops where diseased meat has previously been discovered are occasionally visited.
4. If complaints are made of meat obtained from any particular shop, the general character of the meat in that shop is supervised for some time.
5. There are numerous sales of cattle and carcasses taking place every day in the week, at the several auction marts in the city; these are not visited, unless a direct complaint is made at the Sanitary Offices, as to diseased carcasses being on sale : sometimes the complaint proves to be well founded, at other times it is not so.

The methods here indicated are certainly unsatisfactory and are not the most successful in securing the sale of good meat. The methods lack system, and in my opinion it is impossible to have any effective system with seven slaughter-houses in different parts of the town and with no general dead meat market to which it is compulsory to bring, for the purpose of inspection, all carcasses whether killed in the slaughter-houses, or brought into the town from the country.

The proper inspection of meat is so intimately conjoined with the question of public abattoirs, that I have no other suggestion to make than what I made more than two years ago.

An inspector might, however, be temporarily appointed whose chief duty would be to supervise the business in the slaughter-houses and in the cattle marts. There would still be channels and opportunities for those determined to successfully evade the law, though in the meantime this kind of supervision would be, I believe, more effective than the one presently existing.

In 1883, attention was directed to the need, in Aberdeen, of improved accommodation for the slaughtering of cattle, and the importance of having proper arrangements to prevent the traffic in diseased meat. In 1884, that requirement was a second time prominently referred to. Now, in 1885, its necessity is again urged. The slaughter-houses are as filthy as ever, as unsuitable as ever, and still a source of nuisance and ill-health, and are frequently complained of by the inhabitants who dwell near them. Opportunity was taken last year when visiting Glasgow, Birkenhead, Birmingham, Leeds, Newcastle, Edinburgh, and Dundee, to inquire into what was done in these towns, and the following report is now presented, as it deals directly with the subject in hand.

Before proceeding with this report, it may be as well to quote the remarks made on the Aberdeen slaughter-houses in Wales Street, which are certainly the best in Aberdeen, by the members of a deputation from Leeds, who visited Aberdeen, amongst other large towns, in order to collect the best information on abattoirs, as the Corporation were contemplating the erection of large abattoirs in their town.—“I am afraid that the less I say of them the better, for I saw little, if anything, that I should recommend the Markets Committee of the Leeds Corporation to copy, but much to avoid. I think, I may safely defer any further remarks on Aberdeen abattoirs.”

As a result of a visit to the above-mentioned towns, both in England and Scotland, one could not help being impressed with the unanimous opinion prevailing amongst the several Health Authorities, that private slaughter-houses should be abolished altogether, and that public abattoirs should be erected in their stead, and under the management, full control, and supervision of the Town Council, and further, that these public abattoirs ought to be built on the confines of the town, when practicable, and failing that, then in a part of the town, and on a site that would always insure a considerable space between the grounds attached to the abattoirs and the nearest dwelling-house.

In Liverpool, the medical men having noted the injurious effects of the present slaughter-houses, petitioned the Town Council against them, and this body is now considering where a suitable site can be obtained for public ones. In Birmingham, the Corporation is at present considering a scheme for the erection of public abattoirs. In Leeds, such abattoirs are being built; and in Newcastle, the Medical Officer of Health has reported on the necessity of them. Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dundee, have already provided public abattoirs, thus keeping pace with our Continental neighbours, who, in this respect, are in advance of us, both in the supervision exercised over all meat supply

and the cleanliness with which it is prepared for the market. Thus Paris, Antwerp, Brussels, Rotterdam, have all magnificent abattoirs. Diagrams of these are placed on the table.

For the easier and more certain inspection of carcasses, whether of animals killed in the slaughter-houses, or of animals killed in the country and brought into town, the Authorities have, in the above-mentioned places, considered it necessary to place, in connection with the abattoir, a dead meat market, through which the carcasses require to be passed for inspection previous to their sale. They have also usually provided a cattle-market to adjoin the buildings, and in this way the whole business and nuisance, if any, is confined to one locality. Provision is also made against the driving of cattle through the streets, by the construction of branch lines from the principal railways into the abattoir.

Everywhere the objections to private slaughter-houses seem to be the same, and may be summed up—(a) their offensiveness, (b) the facilities they afford for selling diseased meat; for, notwithstanding stringent bye-laws and regulations, private slaughter-houses continue to be offensive nuisances to the neighbourhood they are in, and their inspection, however frequent, neither brings them up to a proper state of cleanliness, nor guarantees any important diminution in the sale of diseased meat.

The penalties for dealing in diseased meat are much heavier in England than in Scotland. In England £20 is a very general fine, and to recalcitrant delinquents the punishment may be imprisonment, without the option of a fine. Of fifteen prosecutions in 1883, in Birmingham, seven butchers were fined, and eight were sent to prison.

GLASGOW.

Glasgow has three abattoirs. The principal one is in Moore Street, adjoining an extensive cattle-market, into which runs a railway: this arrangement lessens, to a great extent, the driving of cattle through the streets. From the live stock market the animals are taken directly into the lairs, and from the lairs to the abattoirs, where they are slaughtered, and the dressed carcasses are then either removed to the dead meat market, which forms a part of the building, or are taken away to the different butchers' shops.

The cattle market is not managed by the Corporation, but is leased by them at a rent of £4500, under regulations, and the Superintendent of the Slaughter-houses, who is an official of the Corporation, is also Superintendent of the Cattle Market.

The slaughter-houses and attached buildings cover an area of 12,482 square yards. There are 42 public and 23 private slaughter booths. The floors are paved with asphalt. The walls are of rough stone : this rough stonework is not to be recommended, as it readily becomes soiled, and is difficult to clean. They should have been lined with ordinary Portland cement. In addition to special slaughter-houses for pigs, there are rooms for tripe cleaning. The women engaged in tripe cleaning are employed and paid by the Corporation.

The number of the different animals slaughtered during a twelve-month was—

Oxen.	Calves.	Sheep & Lambs.	Pigs.	Goats.
58,646.	1,202.	184,641.	11,167.	35.

The rate charged for the slaughtering of the different animals is—

Ox, Cow, or Bull.	Calf or Sheep.	Lamb.	Sow or Pig.	Hot Water.	Weighing Pigs or Hides.
*9d.	1½d.	¾d.	6d.	3d.	1d.

A rental of £6 extra is charged for the private slaughter-booths. The butchers sell the offal themselves. The dead meat market is divided into a number of stances (with an office in each), let for 10s a-week each. Over and above this, there is a charge on each carcase exposed.

A special lair for suspected animals, and a store-room for condemned meat, are provided. The animals are inspected on their arrival, and those suspected of being diseased are put apart for further examination when being slaughtered. The meat is also inspected before it is removed from the abattoir. One man devotes his whole time to visiting the premises of the abattoir, and inspecting the meat. If he condemns any meat, and a dispute arises over his decision, a jury of butchers is chosen to decide whether the meat is sound or unsound. If no satisfactory decision is come to, then the veterinary surgeon is called in, and should it likely come to be a disputed case in the law courts, then the Medical Officer of Health is called upon to give his opinion.

Condemned meat is destroyed by being boiled, and the fat is sold to the chandlers, while the meat, bones, and hoofs are sold to the manure merchant. One hundred and twenty seven tons of meat were condemned last year.

*NOTE.—The Act gives the Commissioners power to charge one shilling for slaughtering an ox, cow, or bull.

BIRKENHEAD.

The Birkenhead Woodside Lairs and Abattoirs are situated alongside of the Mersey, and are arranged for the immediate slaughtering of foreign cattle when landed. The lairs consist of two large compartments, each measuring 190 feet by 130 feet. They are 30 feet high in the centre; the side walls are 11 feet high. They are lighted by a row of windows in the slanting roof, and are ventilated by large openings in their four walls, which afford good and free cross ventilation. The floors are of concrete. The cattle when landed are placed in these lairs, and kept there until taken to the slaughter-house.

Parallel to the lairs, and separated from them by a yard some 20 feet in width, are six slaughter-houses, with small pens attached. Each slaughter-house is about 36 feet in length, by 32 feet in width; the floor is of concrete, and gently inclines to one side, along which runs a channel taking off the liquid matters to a gully that overflows into a drain. The walls are lined with cement to the height of 6 feet. The manager expressed an opinion that they would have been better if cemented to the roof. Projecting from the walls are iron hooks—nearly all the fittings and furnishings of the slaughter-houses are of iron, wood-work being objected to on the ground of the great difficulty experienced in keeping it clean. Louvre openings at the top serve as ventilators.

Two water taps are in each slaughter-house; one for the ordinary supply of water, the other with a nozzle on it for flushing out the premises immediately after use.

The meat stores are also six in number, and are parallel to the slaughter-houses; a covered passage, some 22 feet wide, connects the two. Their arrangement is very similar to that of the slaughter-houses. Iron beams run from the slaughter-houses into the meat stores, and on these are running-pulleys to carry the dressed carcasses from one compartment to the other. The removal is very easily effected. A slight push is sufficient. Two sets of railways in the covered passage allow of railway trucks being brought up to the door of the meat-store, and there loaded. Each meat-store when full will contain about one hundred carcasses, arranged in four rows on iron beams, with sufficient space between to allow of their inspection.

By a continuation of the beams the carcasses can be taken into refrigerating chambers, the walls and floors of which are packed with charcoal. Cold air is pumped in from the refrigerating apparatus at a temperature of 30° frost. The large number of cattle killed at Birkenhead, varying from 2000 to 4000 per week, necessitates some such chilling apparatus. Each butcher or owner of cattle has to provide

his own man to slaughter his cattle, but no one is permitted to be employed on the premises except those who have received badges from the superintendent.

I am indebted to Dr Vacher, the Birkenhead Medical Officer of Health, for the accompanying diagram of these abattoirs and lairs.

LEEDS.

The Leeds new Cattle Market and Abattoirs, in course of construction, are on an extensive scale, and when they are finished will cover a piece of ground 16 acres in area, and be enclosed by a high wall. From the road there will be only one entrance, where the market inspector's house and offices are situated. The site chosen is convenient in having on three sides the main railway lines that enter the town, and can thus be easily approached by railway sidings taken from the main lines into the market. The Corporation has made an arrangement with the different companies whereby two sidings have been brought into the market, and which by agreement give access to eight different railway companies. The two companies most interested have constructed the branch lines at a cost of £4000 to each of them.

The landing dock is large enough to accommodate a train of thirty cattle trucks at one time, and immediately adjoins the cattle pens, which by their arrangement facilitate the housing of the cattle without any need of driving them across the market. The position of the calf pens at one end of the siding also avoids any unnecessary carting.

1000 cattle, 500 calves, 2500 pigs, and 7000 sheep can be accommodated in the pens; however, for future extension there is enough space to allow of a further accommodation of 2600 cattle, 800 calves, 600 pigs, and 14,000 sheep.

Several blocks of abattoirs are to be built; each block to consist of sixteen houses. Overhead tramways are to be in connection with the blocks, for easy and quick conveyance of carcasses either to the train trucks or to the meat market.

Each slaughter-house is to measure 24 feet by 24 feet. The floor is to be of concrete, faced with flags set in cement; and the inside walls are to be lined with white glazed bricks; while the roofs are to be ventilated by louvre openings, and at the same time well lighted. At the back of each slaughter-house is to be a pining shed, but with a space intervening sufficient for proper ventilation, thus preventing exhalations from the living cattle, and their polluted bedding, from gaining direct access to the killing booth. A shed and special slaughter-house for diseased or suspicious cattle are provided, as well as a store and boiling-house for diseased meat. The cattle are to be inspected

immediately they arrive, again at the time they are slaughtered, and later on the carcasses are to be inspected in the dead meat market.

The inspector has the power to seize any meat he may consider diseased; should his procedure be objected to on the plea that the meat is good, then the Medical Officer of Health is required to give his opinion.

The annexed plan of the Leeds Cattle Market and Abattoirs kindly given to me by the Chairman of the Leeds Health Committee, will be useful.

EDINBURGH.

The Edinburgh abattoirs were built so long back as 1850, and, though over 30 years old, are still in some respects worthy of imitation. When built they were models of their kind. They cost £22,163.

In 1874, £6440 were expended in the extension, alteration, and improvement of the slaughter-houses. There are now 55 booths, each measuring 24 feet by 18 feet. They are built in parallel blocks with roadways between.

Outside the booths, which are well arranged as regards paving, drainage, lighting, and ventilation, are tanks that intercept any solid material from passing into the drains with which their overflow is connected. The tanks are emptied several times a day by scavengers, who are also constantly employed, during working hours, removing refuse and filth from the premises; by these means the abattoirs are always kept clean and free of nuisance.

The superintendent of the abattoirs is responsible for the inspection of meat; he sees the animals that are brought in; he inspects the slaughtering of any that appear diseased; and he inspects all meat before it is taken away from the premises: should any be diseased it is seized by him, and with the consent of the owner destroyed. If that assent is not given, then the Medical Officer of Health is called in, and on his opinion the Magistrates act.

During the first six months of 1884 the following quantity of diseased meat was seized and destroyed:—

	Lbs.
January,	3,004.
February,	4,549.
March,	5,781.
April,	9,664.
May,	10,768.
June,	7,702.

Since the erection of the abattoirs, houses have been built close up to the boundary wall. This is especially so on one side. Quantities of diseased meat were discovered to be surreptitiously passed through the windows of these houses, and wire screens had therefore to be put on to the windows.

The average number of animals slaughtered in a twelvemonth is—

	Oxen.	Calves.	Sheep.	Swine.
In Allotted Booths,	22,892	4,297	147,931	1,629
In Common Booths,	1,941	463	5,950	1,627
	<u>24,833</u>	<u>4,760</u>	<u>153,881</u>	<u>3,256</u>

The rate charged for the slaughtering of the different animals has recently been reduced to—

(Rate on Flesher Renting Booth.)				
Bull, Ox, or Cow.	Calf.	Sheep or Lamb.	Sow or Pig.	Deer.
4½d.	2¼d.	¾d.	2¼d.	2¼d.
(Rent on Flesher not Renting a Booth.)				
Bull, Ox, or Cow.	Calf.	Sheep or Lamb.	Sow or Pig.	Deer.
9d.	4½d.	1½d.	4½d.	4½d.

The Municipality receives a fixed annuity of £1000 a-year, and the charges are regulated so as to provide for this, over and above the cost of working, of interest, and of sinking fund.

DUNDEE.

Situated near the river-side the Dundee abattoirs are enclosed within the same boundary wall as the cattle-market, into which runs a branch line from the Caledonian Railway. The buildings cover 3 acres of ground—the abattoirs taking up one third, and the cattle-market the remaining two thirds. There are 3 additional acres of unoccupied ground ready, should they be required for future extension. The Commissioners paid £10,000 for the ground, and spent £21,787 in the erection of buildings. A large portion of this cost was incurred in consequence of the foundations for the buildings having to be piled, the site being upon land that had been reclaimed from the river.

At the entrance gate is the porter's lodge, inside is a general office, and next to this the superintendent's office, above which is the superintendent's house. There are waiting-rooms, and other rooms for the convenience of the men employed. There are 21 slaughter-houses, of which 16 are private and 5 public; and in immediate connection with them are 21 lairs. Each slaughter-house measures 21 feet by 21 feet, and is 20 feet high. Each lair measures 21 feet by 21 feet, and is 12

feet high. Both are well ventilated by means of louvres in the roof and openings above the doors. The floors are of pavement slabs, with cement between them, and laid on concrete. The walls are lined with glazed bricks. Iron hooks project from the wall some 40 inches.

In addition to a slaughter-house and lairs for pigs there are for the cleaning and preparation of tripe, two compartments which have a plentiful supply both of hot and cold water. There is a blood room, a gut room, and a room for cleaning cattle feet. There is a dead meat market, 134 feet long, 35 feet broad, and 20 feet high. It also serves as a cooling room for the carcasses of animals slaughtered in the public stalls.

The number of animals killed during a twelvemonth in the abattoirs was—

Cattle.	Calves.	Sheep.	Pigs.
12,005	574	19,835	2,375

The rate charged for the slaughtering of the different animals is—

(Rented Slaughter-houses, *i.e.*, Private Stalls.)

Cattle.	Calves.	Sheep.	Pigs.
1s. each.	2d.	3d.	1s each
(Slaughtering only.)			

(Unrented Slaughter-houses, *i.e.*, Public Stalls.)

Cattle.	Calves.	Sheep.	Pigs.
1s. 9d. each.	4d.	5d.	1s each.
(Slaughtering only.)			

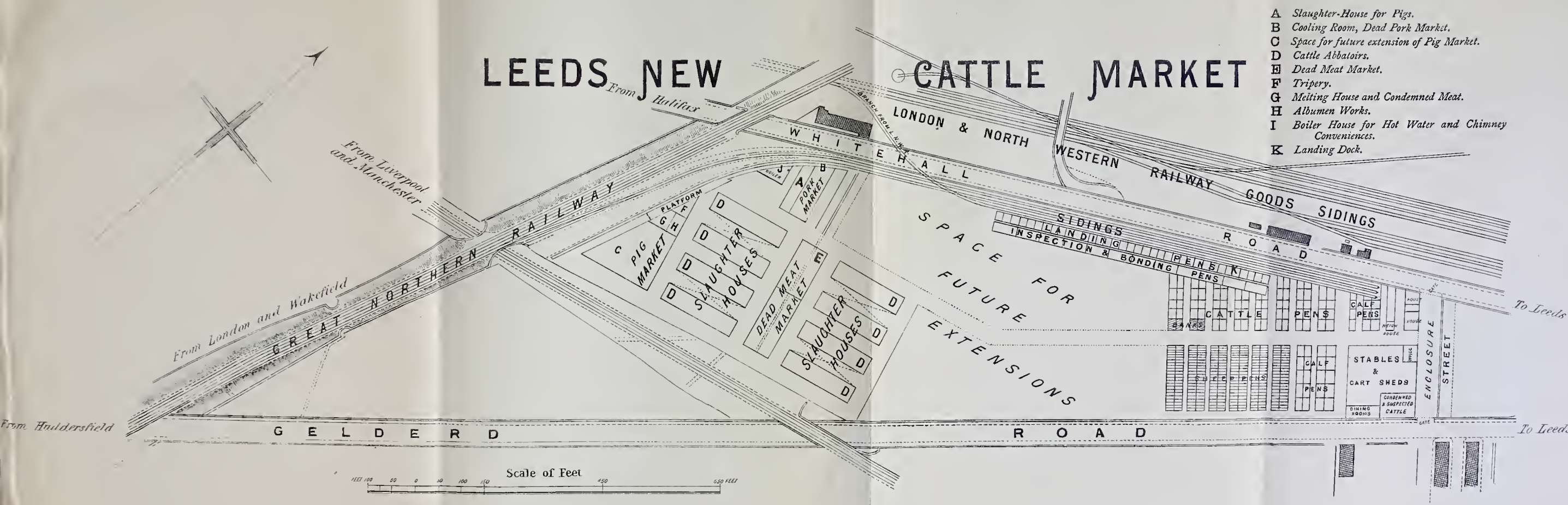
Diseased meat is seized by the superintendent; in the event of a dispute, which is rare, a veterinary surgeon is employed.

No person, within a distance of two miles beyond the burgh, is allowed to slaughter cattle, except at the public abattoirs. All carcasses slaughtered beyond the above-mentioned boundary and brought into the town have to pass through the dead meat market, and have certain dues levied upon them.

W. J. SIMPSON, M.D.

5th August, 1885.





- A Slaughter-House for Pigs.
- B Cooling Room, Dead Pork Market.
- C Space for future extension of Pig Market.
- D Cattle Abbatoirs.
- E Dead Meat Market.
- F Tripery.
- G Melting House and Condemned Meat.
- H Albumen Works.
- I Boiler House for Hot Water and Chimney Conveniences.
- K Landing Dock.

Plan of the WOODSIDE LAIRAGE.

JOHN AVERY & Co. LD., LITHOS, ABERDEEN.

*The Brown Tint indicates the area of the
Foreign Animals' Wharf*

